



# Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilot

## *Kalamazoo, MI*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

**EPA's** Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

### BACKGROUND

EPA Region 5 selected the City of Kalamazoo for a Regional Brownfields Pilot. Kalamazoo (population 81,000) has 28 State-designated environmental hazardous waste sites, 49 leaking underground storage tank sites, and three Superfund sites. Five percent of the City's taxable property (about 450 acres) are brownfields located in older neighborhoods where 64 percent of the City's minority population live. More than 30 percent of the population in these neighborhoods live below the poverty level, and unemployment is 16 percent. Without adequate resources to address brownfields, new development has migrated to greenfields — causing the loss of jobs, a reduced tax base, and a strain on local resources to support urban sprawl.

### OBJECTIVES

Kalamazoo's brownfields objective is to prevent future brownfields and retain existing industry while promoting a renewed interest in industrial and commercial investment within the City. Kalamazoo intends to create a systematic approach for redeveloping under-used and potentially contaminated properties in the City.

### PILOT SNAPSHOT



*Kalamazoo, Michigan*

**Date of Award:**  
August 1996

**Amount:** \$100,000

**Site Profile:** The Pilot targets brownfields clustered along older industrial and commercial corridors in and around the City's central business district, along railroad lines, and along the Kalamazoo River.

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Visit the EPA Brownfields Website at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot has:

- Completed inventory of City-owned brownfields and maps of the brownfields sites have been entered into the GIS system. Site evaluation criteria were used in creating an inventory of priority brownfields sites;
- Initiated data collection inventory for privately-owned brownfields; and
- Produced several television programs to update the community on the progress of the Brownfields Pilot through the local cable station.

The Pilot is:

- Involving the community in developing options for possible site reuses;
- Working with the Coalition for Urban Redevelopment in community outreach;
- Conducting assessments and developing redevelopment plans for top priority sites;
- Preparing analyses of potential land uses based on the results of the environmental assessments and cleanup plans; and
- Identifying financial and human resources for brownfields redevelopment through public/private partnerships.

- The City expects to sign its first site redevelopment agreement with a local small business that has committed to build a light manufacturing facility at one of the top five priority brownfields.
- The community outreach team is working on program development for a regional brownfields conference.

## LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the Kalamazoo Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities including the following.

- The City is using the Kalamazoo Custom Metal Works (Lyons Manufacturing) project as a model for its brownfields implementation plan. This project demonstrates a successful mix of City, State, and private sector involvement to return the property to productive use and create, as well as retain, jobs.